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# NOTES FROM THE MEDICAL PRESS

IN CHARGE OF

ELIZABETH ROBINSON SCOVIL



**STIMULATING THE SECRETION IN NURSING WOMEN.**—The *Medical Record* in a synopsis of an article from a German contemporary says: "Zlocisti points out the necessity of encouraging nursing instead of bottle-feeding and reports the results he has had with a purified form of cotton-seed used as a galactagogue. The observations of dairymen have established the value of the oil-cake obtained as a by-product in the expression of the oil from cotton-seed as a means of increasing the milk output of dairies, and the author has employed a purified product deprived of its indigestible cellulose constituents for a similar purpose with nursing women. The results showed that the preparation was not found disagreeable to take by the women and that it did not seem to cause any undesirable effects. In all of the twelve cases in which it was given it seemed to cause a very marked stimulation of the milk flow, which became apparent on the third or fourth day, when twenty-five to thirty grammes of the substance had been administered."

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**FOR THE DISINFECTION OF STOOLS.**—*Revue française de médecine et de chirurgie* for January 11 recommends a teaspoonful (five grammes, or seventy-five grains) of the following mixture to be put into the commode: Zinc sulphate, one hundred grammes (three ounces); sulphuric acid, five to ten grammes (seventy-five to one hundred and fifty minims); essential oil of mirbane, 0.02 gramme (one-third minim); indigo blue, 0.15 gramme (one-sixth grain). The blue is merely a distinctive mark to prevent errors. This mixture effectually kills the unpleasant odor of stools and urine.

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**CONSUMING ONE'S OWN SMOKE.**—This bit of advice given to medical students by Dr. William Osler may well be laid to heart by nurses: "A conscientious pursuit of Plato's ideal perfection may teach you the three great lessons of life. You may learn to consume your own smoke. The atmosphere of life is darkened by the murmurings and whimperings of men and women over the non-essentials, the trifles, that are inevitably incident to the hurly-burly of the day's routine. Things cannot always go your way. Learn to accept in silence the minor aggravations, cultivate the gift of taciturnity, and consume your own smoke with an extra draught of hard work, so that those about you may not be annoyed with the dust and soot of your complaints."

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**ARTIFICIAL CAMPHOR.**—The *Journal of the American Medical Association* says: "Prior to 1828 chemists made a sharp distinction between organic and inorganic compounds, it being supposed that the latter are capable of preparation in the laboratory, while the former are formed only in the living organism, animal or vegetable, under the influence of a particular force—the life force."

This view was rendered untenable by Wohler's discovery that urea, a typical secretion of the animal organism, can be prepared synthetically from cyanic acid and ammonia, two inorganic compounds. Many other 'organic' compounds, such as acetic acid, lactic acid, glycerin, and sugar have since been made synthetically, and as our knowledge of chemistry increased the old idea about a vital force has lost greatly in significance. We know now that the same chemical forces act both in the organic and inorganic worlds. It is well known that most of the vanilla extract now found on the market is not derived from the vanilla bean, but from coal-tar. This coal-tar furnishes a large number of other substances which are used in medicine and in the arts. Among these may be mentioned the various analgesics, aniline dyes, and perfumes. Indigo and alcohol have also been made from their inorganic constituents, and recently chemists have discovered a method of making camphor synthetically, which makes the manufacture of this substance a profitable industry. Camphor has the formula  $C_{10}H_{16}O$ , and is an organic compound which was formerly derived only from the camphor-tree, *Cinnamomum camphora*, by distilling the chips with water and purifying the product by sublimation. The camphor-trees have, however, been growing scarce, and as a result the price of camphor has of late been very high. Japan has a monopoly on the natural product, but this monopoly has now been broken by the manufacture in this country of artificial camphor from turpentine. Turpentine has the formula of  $C_{10}H_{16}$ , and can be oxidized to  $C_{10}H_{16}O$  by heating it with oxalic acid. A ton of turpentine is heated at one time with a quantity of oxalic acid, and out of this mixture is distilled the purest variety of camphor. It takes fifteen hours to complete a lot, and the yield of camphor is twenty-five to thirty per cent. of the weight of turpentine. Various other valuable oils are obtained at the same time as by-products."

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**TUBERCULOSIS AND PREGNANCY.**—The *New York and Philadelphia Medical Journal* has a synopsis of an article in the *Berliner Klinische Wochenschrift* as follows: "Hahn concludes that tuberculosis is unfavorably affected by pregnancy, the more so the more frequent the pregnancy. The prevention of conception by tuberculous women is one of the duties of sanitarians and physicians. If pregnancy take place, however, the woman must be carefully watched, and if she become worse, the question of the induction of labor must be considered on the ground that the mother's life is more valuable than that of the unborn child. In the later months of pregnancy, however, the induction of labor may be a serious thing for the mother, and as she may give birth to a healthy child, she may be allowed to go to full term or as long as necessary to preserve the life of the child. Pregnant tuberculous women should come first in the public care of the tuberculous poor, for they are under special stress and strain."

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**THE BICYCLE AS A THERAPEUTIC AGENT.**—The following letter appears in the *Boston Medical and Surgical Journal*:

"CLEVELAND, OHIO, January 20, 1904.

"MR. EDITOR: I was very much interested in the valuable article entitled, 'The Bicycle as a Therapeutic Agent,' contributed by Dr. L. H. Gulick, and which appeared in the *Journal* of January 14, 1904.

"While reading the article it occurred to me that it might be of interest to relate the use that I have made of the tricycle for the treatment and cure of congenital flat-foot or weakened arch in children. When this condition is early

observed I recommend the parents to secure for the child a small tricycle, allowing the child to run it about in the house and also on the sidewalk and street. The results are more certain and satisfactory if the child is kept in bare feet during the warm months. If the vehicle is furnished the child at the beginning of the summer, it is not only surprising how much time the tot will spend in the saddle, but, better yet, the season often serves to effect a complete cure before the novelty has worn away. This simple measure has been so uniformly successful in relieving the condition that I now never prescribe anything else. It serves the double purpose of taking the weight of the child off the weakened arch, but also is a very potent means of exercising and developing the muscles of the foot and thus gradually but certainly building up a natural resistance to the weakness. Very truly yours,

“CHARLES J. ALDRICH, M.D.”

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ARE REST CURES NECESSARY?—The *New York and Philadelphia Medical Journal*, quoting from a German contemporary, says: “Bornstein insists that in cases of emaciation and of neurasthenia the Weir-Mitchell rest cure may be of service, as well as in cases of movable kidney, where it is desired to get all the fat necessary for the support of the displaced organ. Instead, he gives albumen in large quantities—not meat, on account of its extractives—to produce an excess of proteids, which cause the cells to overwork and thus to rid themselves of their vicious contents. Iron is given at the same time, preferably in the form of iron and quinine. He says that isolation, nurses, hydrotherapy, mechanotherapy, and electrical treatment are all unnecessary, and that without them certain and lasting results can be obtained.”

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CORYZA.—Dr. Genglaire, of Coucy-le-château, writes to *Médecine moderne* to the effect that he has found of value the practice of painting the nasal fossæ with a pencil of absorbent cotton steeped in hydrogen peroxide five or six times daily. He states that a cure generally results within the twenty-four hours.

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INSOMNIA.—Dr. Eliot Gorton read a paper on this subject before the Practitioners' Club of Newark, N. J. He classifies the treatment under these heads—dietetic, hygienic, and medical. He advises regulating the bowels and giving a light, nourishing diet. A warm full bath, just before going to bed, followed by a hot drink, preferably of milk, and, if necessary, a moderate hypnotic, is effective. The face should be bathed with cold water and the head above the eyes be wrapped in a cold, wet towel during the bath, which should be kept at ninety-eight degrees and last from fifteen to twenty-five minutes. The cold wet-pack and warm sitz baths may also be tried. Hot foot-baths are highly recommended, and should be continued until the feet are intensely red. He considers paraldehyde the safest hypnotic, and the best form paraldehyde two parts, whiskey one part, syrup of orange one part. This disguises the pungent odor and taste. The mixture must be well shaken before giving it. Opium and its alkaloids should not be given for insomnia. Small doses stimulate and excite the nervous system, producing a condition of wakefulness in the majority of cases, while larger doses present disagreeable after-effects. The results from its use are often more difficult to deal with than the affection itself. In insomnia from excessive mental or physical fatigue he recommends a mild stimulant, as strychnia or a glass of ale or porter. Hot milk or malted milk is also of great service. He entirely excludes tea and coffee from the diet-list, and cocoa and chocolate in most cases.